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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the influences on parents' selection of child care. One study cited determined that in their search for child care, parents use informal sources of information, though educated parents are more likely to use resource and referral systems. Other studies have shown that parents are more concerned about cost, convenience, and reliability, than they are with indicators of quality in child care. Research indicates that mothers do not understand the link between provider training and preparation, and the quality and cost of child care. A list of references is provided. A preliminary report entitled "Families and Work Institute," by Nancy Cohen, is included. This report discusses the incentives and disincentives for child care providers to attend training, and the implications of training for the quality of child care. Descriptive information on the Families and Work Institute is included. Also included is a summary of the Institute's 1989-1990 projects in policy research, information dissemination, organizational planning, and training. (BC)

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ELLEN GALINSKY

FAMILIES AND WORK INSTITUTE

"Do preparation and training systems influence the early childhood education "market"? Do parents choose educators with higher levels of preparation? What impact does cost have on such choices?"

Although there are many ways to respond to this question, I will focus on parents' selection of child care. I can imagine this focus provoking confusion in some parents and educators: The question asks about early childhood education -- not child care. Research, however, has confirmed that the name on the door and the number of hours the early childhood program is open do not predetermine whether or not developmentally appropriate learning occurs within. In fact, much of the early education in this country takes place in child care settings (Hayes, Palmer & Zaslow, 1990; Mitchell, Seligson & Marx, 1989).

The first issue to address concerns the search process: What sources of information do parents use in selecting child care and how thoroughly do they look? Mathematica's Study (Kisker, Maynard, Gordon and Strain, 1989) in three communities pointed to the importance of informal sources of information in guiding parents' decision-making. Other studies indicate that highly educated parents are more likely to use resource and referral systems to assist in the search process than are less well educated parents. A plausible,

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more advantaged parents are steered toward better quality child care arrangements, even arrangements in which the providers are more likely to be trained.

In the Mathematica Study, only half of the mothers visited more than one arrangement and, all told, the mothers spent about half a day in the selection process. Their major reasons for making the choices they did were "quality", "location", and "cost". Unfortunately, however, the Mathematica Study did not probe the respondent's definition of quality.

This is the next issue to be addressed: How do parents judge child care quality and do they take into account the preparation and training of providers? A recent study that Shinn, Galinsky and Gulcur (1990) conducted sheds some light on this subject. We found that there are unrelated factors at play. One factor concerns the aspects of care that affect the parents (hours, cost, location, flexibility opportunity for parental input into decisions, etc.). Lack of satisfaction with this set of conditions was linked to maternal stress and stress-related health problems, but not to mothers' overall satisfaction with child care. A second factor relates to children's experiences in child care (the attention they receive from teachers, activities, discipline, etc.). The extent to which teachers were trained was not investigated. This later set of items was correlated with overall satisfaction with child care, but not to maternal stress or health issues.

How, then, do mothers prioritize these two aspects of child care? Do they look for arrangements that meet their own requirements in

terms of convenience, cost, etc. and then make decisions on the basis of the factors that affect their children or do these factors come first in the decision-making process or are they interrelated?

The research literature suggests that parents are more concerned about cost, convenience, and reliability, than they are with the indicators of quality that developmental researchers find important (Lein, 1979; Sonenstein, in press; Unco, Inc. 1975). Waite, Leibowitz, and Witsberger (in press) found little relationship between what parents in a national sample paid for child care, and structural aspects of quality (such as group size, ratio, and teacher training).

Some research indicates that parents perceive they have few options when it comes to selecting care for their children and that they are often unable to obtain their first choice of arrangements (Shinn, Galinsky & Gulcur, 1990; Sonnenstein, in press). Each of these facts could attenuate relationships between parents' perceptions of quality and what they pay for child care. On the other hand, Hofferth and Wissoker (1990) found that the ratio of children to staff members was a significant factor affecting parents' choice of child care centers. The National Child Care Survey currently being administered by the Urban Institute for the Administration for Children, Youth and Families and The National Association for the Education of Young Children will add to our knowledge on how parents define quality and its role in their selection process (Hofferth & Willer, 1989). In this study, respondents are asked to name the two most important reasons for selecting child care. If a respondent happens to mention quality, the survey asks the respondent to name the

two most important quality features including child-related, provider-related, program-related, and facility-related factors. Unfortunately, however, parents can bypass mentioning quality and so for that sample, we will know little about how quality-related issues come to play in their decision-making process.

A recent study we conducted suggests that parental understanding of quality has limitations. In comparing professional assessments of the actual quality of care with maternal satisfaction, Shinn, Phillips, Howes, Galinsky and Whitebook (1990) found that mothers, surprisingly, were more satisfied when group size was larger and staff/child ratios were poorer. There was no relationship between maternal satisfaction and whether or not the provider had been trained. Mothers, however, were attuned to the teacher's style of interacting with the child, especially if that style was detached, as opposed to sensitive and responsive. Furthermore, mothers were seemingly more aware of quality in preschool programs than infant/toddler programs.

Anecdotal evidence bears out these findings. In AEYC conferences I've attended around the country, providers complain that parents do not appreciate the fact that they are enrolled in or have completed training programs or are attending conferences. Perhaps this relates to the fact that many parents still seem to think of child care as a custodial rather than a developmental or educational service. Furthermore, providers bitterly deride the fact that additional training usually brings no salary increases. If higher compensation is provided, the increase is usually minuscule. For example,

providers in West Virginia who had just completed their CDA's were upset that the increase of a few pennies an hour was insulting. The research that the Families and Work Institute is conducting on Family-to-Family, the Mervyn's and Target Stores initiatives to train and credential family child care providers also reveals that providers don't ask parents for higher fees when they've completed their training.

In conclusion, the research to date indicates that mothers do not understand the link between provider training and preparation and the quality and cost of care their children receive. Since the studies to date have not specifically focused on this question further research is clearly on:

- The extent to which parents (especially low-income or less advantaged parents who have been shown to select poorer quality care) consider the training of child care providers and the degree to which this influences their choices of child care arrangements for their own children.
- The extent to which consumer education could influence parents' understanding of the importance of training and their willingness to pay more (if they are able to do so).

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FAMILIES AND WORK INSTITUTE
Prepared by Nancy Cohen for Ellen Galinsky

What incentives/disincentives exist to encourage/discourage family child care providers to participate in preparation and training programs? How does this influence the cost of quality?

SUMMARY

This paper is based on telephone interviews with four sites of the Family-to-Family project, an initiative which focuses on increasing the quality of family child care by supporting training and accreditation of family child care providers as well as consumer education for parents. Launched by Mervyn's and the Dayton Hudson Foundation in 1988, the initiative will fund projects in 15 communities over four years. Target Stores started replicating the Family-to-Family project in 1990, doubling the number of sites. The Families and Work Institute is evaluating the initiative.

A variety of incentives encouraging providers to participate in training lead to the high completion rates of many training programs (90% or better for classroom training among the Family-to-Family sites we studied). These motivations are important, but for many providers, not powerful enough to overcome the formidable disincentives.

One-to-one, personal contact with providers can overcome the obstacles and thus is an effective investment. Starting and strengthening provider Associations are also effective investments in encouraging providers to attend training. Given that there are already many good, basic training curricula and that customizing any curriculum to local providers' needs is a key to success, customizing existing curricula is a more sound investment than developing new, basic curricula. By directly addressing payment (and related self-esteem issues), training programs can work toward addressing a major disincentive discouraging providers from attending training in the first place — that providers do not earn more as a result of training. Finally, evaluation is a good investment because it identifies what is working and what is not, and gives ideas for improvement.

THE INCENTIVES

Family child care providers' motivations to attend training include:

- **Wanting To Improve The Quality Of Care For Children.** Providers often attend training because they want the best possible experiences for the children in their care.

- **Wanting Help With Day-To-Day Activities.** For example, providers like workshops on record-keeping and preparing taxes, and on new activities for children. This motivation is often strongest for new providers, although it exists among providers with all levels of experience.

- **Viewing Family Child Care As A Profession Requiring Training.** Some providers see family child care as profession and that they can benefit from instruction. This motivation is significant because it breaks from the cultural norm that caring for children is a natural skill not requiring training. This motivation is most common among providers pursuing advanced training, and among providers who previously held jobs that required training, such as nurses and public school teachers.

• **Wanting to Network and Socialize With Colleagues.** After providers attend their first classes, they are often motivated to continue because they learn and receive support from their peers. Before attending training, many providers are isolated and do not know other providers. During training, providers get to know and learn from each other, and may exchange referrals. Home-based training programs often include some group meeting or mentoring component so that providers can benefit from interacting with their colleagues.

In order to continue interacting with their peers, graduates of training programs often join or start provider Associations (or other support groups). The on-going peer support providers receive from participating in Associations encourages them to attend additional training (which may be organized by the Association).

• **Needing To Meet Requirements.** Some providers attend training because it is a prerequisite for state regulation, participation in the Child Care Food Program, insurance, membership in enhanced referral networks, or maintaining accreditation status.

THE DISINCENTIVES

The disincentives that discourage providers from attending training include:

• **Limited Time And Energy.** Providers commonly work 10 to 12 hour days and often have families of their own that need attention. Finding the time and energy to attend training can be challenging.

• **Fear.** A major obstacle to training for some providers is fear — fear of the unknown, fear that they cannot succeed, and fear of or frustration with the idea of attending a school-like program. Additionally, some providers with low literacy levels may fear they will not be able to manage the reading and writing. Furthermore, if the location of the training is far from home, providers are more reluctant to offend.

• **Salary Does Not Increase.** As a rule, providers do not charge more after attending training. One part of the problem is that some parents are not able or willing to pay more. Another significant problem, however, is that providers are often not comfortable raising their fees.

• **Cost.** The cost of classes discourages providers from attending training. (Training programs that are part of the Family-to-Family project range from free to $140 for 32 hours of training.) While some providers cannot afford the fees, it is likely that others could, but do not see the advantage of making such an investment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COST OF QUALITY

• **Invest In One-To-One Contact With Providers.** The disincentives described above are often stronger than the incentives. Providers frequently need to be convinced to attend training. One proven strategy to address the disincentives is for staff (or trained, experienced providers) to form personal connections with providers — one-to-one contact. This goes beyond advertising training and then teaching the class. In the case of home-based training, it goes beyond giving providers manuals or videos to use on their own. One-to-one contact includes some combination of personal outreach, telephone follow-up, home visits, and mentoring programs.

One-to-one contact helps providers understand how training will be useful to them and why it is worth their investment of time, energy, and money. Also, if providers develop a phone relationship with a friendly staff member or trained, experienced provider, the new experience of training may seem less frightening. Additionally, personal contact gives providers who are fearful of training the opportunity to find out how challenging the class will be. Finally, people are more likely to attend any kind of class or meeting if they are reminded and know that someone expects them.

One-to-one contact is particularly necessary when training is new to a community. (One Family-to-Family site estimates that it had extensive discussions with three providers for every one who attended the first series of training workshops.) Once providers in the community have begun to attend training workshops (after one year or so), news of the training tends to spread by word-of-mouth, notifying other providers that the training exists and conveying its usefulness.

- **Invest In Developing Associations.** Starting and strengthening Associations are sound investments in encouraging providers to attend training for all of the reasons discussed on page 1.

- **Invest In Customizing Training Programs To Meet Local Providers' Needs.** Only a limited amount of material can be taught in basic training (typically 15 to 20 hours). While some curricula are better than others, none exist or could be developed which would teach providers everything they need to know in such a limited amount of time. There are many good, basic training curricula.[1] The key to success is customization.

Organizations can adapt to the limited time by working with experienced providers to choose an existing curriculum which they find basically sound, and tailoring it to meet the needs of the providers in a particular workshop or home-study program. For example, some providers may need information on becoming regulated and preparing taxes, while others might want to spend more time on child development or caring for infants.

It is also important to tailor training to meet providers' logistical needs, such as convenient meeting times and locations. Finally, when possible training should be customized to reflect providers' other preferences, such as being taught by fellow providers.

- **Invest In Training That Helps Providers Earn A Decent Living.** By directly addressing payment (and related self-esteem) issues, training programs could work toward countering a major disincentive to training — that providers do not earn more as a result of training. Workshops might focus for example, on how to raise fees (for parents who can afford to pay more) and/or how to implement sliding fee scales. Some providers, however, will need assistance with more basic issues, such as: getting paid on time, collecting fees in advance, charging parents extra for picking up children late, and taking paid vacation. Providers would have a strong incentive to attend training if they knew it would help them earn a decent income.

- **Invest In Evaluation.** Research is needed which demonstrates the effect of different approaches and components of training on providers' care for children, on how long providers stay in the field, and on providers' own families. While extensive, quantitative studies are necessary, local projects

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[1] Melvyn's *Training Guide: Family-to-Family Child Care Initiative* describes training programs from the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Iowa State University, the University of North Carolina, Brigham Young University, and the Fairfax Office for Children.

Families and Work Institute

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FAMILIES AND WORK INSTITUTE

The Families and Work Institute is a non-profit research and planning organization committed to developing new approaches for balancing the changing needs of America's families with the continuing need for workplace productivity.

The Institute conducts policy research on a broad range of issues related to the changing demographics of the workforce and operates a national clearinghouse on work and family life. It serves decision-makers from all sectors of society — business, education, community, and government.

The Institute's program is unique in several ways. It considers the entire life-cycle of the family, from child care through elder care; maintains a commitment to both the public and private sectors, to managers as well as assembly-line workers; examines the effects of work on family life as well as the effects of families on work performance; and forecasts future trends with input from all sectors of society.

The Families and Work Institute conducts four major activities:

Research: collects and analyzes data on demographic trends; conducts corporate and community needs assessments; assesses federal, state, and local public policy options; investigates and evaluates emerging solutions to work-family problems.

Dissemination: provides information to corporate and public policy decision-makers through conferences and seminars, publications, and public speaking.

Strategic Planning: advises business, government, and community organizations on the design, implementation, and evaluation of work-family solutions in relation to their overall objectives.

Management Training: designs and conducts corporate-wide programs for organizations that want to respond to work-family needs as a means of maintaining or increasing productivity.

The Families and Work Institute was founded in 1989 by Dana Friedman, formerly at The Conference Board, and Ellen Galinsky, formerly at Bank Street College of Education, both nationally known experts in the work and family field. Located in New York City, the Institute carries out its work with a core staff of in-house researchers and leading experts throughout the country.

The Families and Work Institute is supported by grants and contracts from foundations, corporations, labor unions, government agencies and other organizations.

SUMMARY OF 1989-1990 PROJECTS

1. POLICY RESEARCH

Our studies are designed to provide the data necessary for informed decision-making on important work-family policy issues. We focus on public policy as well as corporate policy. Some of this research focuses on understanding the problem, other studies examine and evaluate the solutions.

A. UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

National Study on the Changing Workforce and Work and Family Life

This nationally representative, longitudinal study will track the changing demographics of the labor force including the growing diversity of the workforce, the increase in the number of women in the workforce, and the aging workforce. We will examine the skills needed by the changing workforce and compare that to the education being provided to young people. The companies co-sponsoring this study are: The Salt River Project, I.B.M., American Express Co., General Mills Foundation, Mobil Corporation, Merck & Co., Inc., Allstate Insurance Company, and Johnson & Johnson.

The Balancing Act for Employees with Elder Care Responsibilities

In collaboration with the Older Women's League, the Families and Work Institute is conducting a longitudinal assessment of how resources in communities and conditions on the job affect the job-related decisions of employed caregivers of the elderly. This study is funded by the Ford Foundation.

Men and the Work/Family Dilemma

With funding from the Ford Foundation, this study is exploring the ways in which workplace policy and culture enable or constrain the ability of fathers to balance their commitments to their jobs and their families. Ortho Pharmaceutical, Apple Computer, Inc. and the law firm of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy are the sites for this study.

The Parent/Teacher Study

This study, a sub-study of the National Child Care Staffing Study, was funded by The Spunk Fund, Inc. Data collection has been completed and several papers have been written that address mothers' satisfaction with child care, the predictors of a positive or negative relationship between parents and teachers, the impact of mothers' jobs on children's development, and the correspondence between parents' satisfaction with child care and researchers' assessments of its quality.

B. DEVELOPING/PERFECTING THE SOLUTION

The Corporate Reference Guide

Work has been completed on this guide addressing the most frequently asked work-family questions posed by companies. This guide will analyze the state of the art of work-family initiatives, introduce an index of family-friendliness and case studies of the top ranking companies on the index, present mini-case studies on a range of work-family options, and provide a comparative analysis of family-supportive policies in 188 companies surveyed across 30 industries. Funding for

this project came from The Ford Foundation. The Guide will be published in March of 1991.

The State Reference Guide

The State Reference Guide parallels the Corporate Reference Guide. It describes and analyzes all of the work-family policies and programs for state employees developed by the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The final report will be published in January 1991 and is funded by the Ford Foundation.

Education Before School: Investing In Quality Child Care

This report, commissioned by the Committee for Economic Development and prepared by the Institute's Co-Presidents, makes the point that the child care system is a major part of the early education system in this country. It describes child care and early education in terms of supply, cost, and quality. It also details the range of child care problems that employees face and the effect of those problems on employee performance and children's well-being. It discusses the corporate role in responding to these problems and concludes with recommendations for future business involvement. It will be published in 1991 by CED.

C. EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF WORK-FAMILY INITIATIVES

The Work-Family Evaluation Study

This study will assess the effects of a comprehensive set of work-family policies and programs at Johnson & Johnson. Assessments will be made before and after the introduction of these programs in order to examine how they influence employees' productivity and family life. This study has been commissioned and supported by Johnson & Johnson.

The Work-Family Collaborative Research Process

This study, funded by the Ford Foundation, will investigate the interaction between work-family policies and other corporate policies in constraining the ability of men and women to fulfill their career and family responsibilities. It will take place in two or more companies and with several research teams. The site for the Institute's study is Corning, Inc. The researchers and a Corning task force will work together to identify barriers and then propose, develop, and implement a range of policies and practices to overcome these barriers and to help men and women achieve change.

The Mervyn's Family-to-Family Evaluation

In 1988, Mervyn's launched a $3.2 million community project to recruit and train family day care providers and to conduct a community education program on quality child care. Target Stores, another subsidiary of Dayton Hudson Corp., has now joined Mervyn's on this multi-year project. Dayton Hudson Foundation provides funding to the Families and Work Institute to evaluate this effort.

The Family Child Care Quality Study

This study will investigate the determinants of quality in family child care that children are receiving, especially in low-income families. It will assess the ways in which interventions, designed to improve the quality of care, are effective. This study has been funded thus far by The A.L. Mailman Family Foundation, The Spunk Fund, Inc., and The David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

The State Parental Leave Study

This project, funded by The Ford Foundation, examines the impact of the newly implemented parental leave statutes on employers and new parents in Oregon, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Rhode Island. This report will be published in January 1991.

The Parental Leave and Productivity Report

With funding from The Ford Foundation and AT&T, national experts on parental leave discuss the costs and benefits of company parental leave policies. Written in a question-and-answer format, the report addresses the questions of decision-makers in the private sector. This report will be published in January 1991.

The Temporary Disability Study

The Families and Work Institute was commissioned to investigate innovative ways to enhance the availability of family leave in the private sector in New York. A report of this investigation, It's a Matter of Time, was released in the spring of 1990. The most promising option featured is the possibility of using New York State's Temporary Disability Insurance System as a vehicle for addressing this problem, an option currently being explored by the state.

New York State Partnership

The Institute is developing a public-private partnership model designed to improve the supply and quality of child care services throughout the state. Funders include: Primerica Corp., I.B.M., Carnegie Corporation of New York, Eastman Kodak Co., New York Telephone Co., and American Express Co.

2. NETWORKING/INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

The Families and Work Institute serves as a central source of information on work-family issues in the United States. As a first step, we have conducted a survey of all groups that provide information on work-family initiatives in each of the 50 states.

Work-Family Conference

The Institute will coordinate and co-sponsor the Conference Board's 1991 Work and Family Conferences in New York and Los Angeles. This event is attended by senior level decision-makers from the private sector.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

We continue to work with a number of organizations, both state governments and corporations, to assist them in developing work-family programs and policies.

Our clients include:

United States Postal Service: As a result of the collective bargaining agreement between the United States Postal Service and its unions, several on-site centers have been created. The Institute serves as advisor to the National Child Care Task Force on these child care initiatives.

The State of Michigan: We have served as consultants to the Governor's Task Force on Child Care.

AT&T: We work with AT&T on the design and implementation of its $10 million Family Care Development Fund.

1199: The Drug, Hospital, and Health Care Employees Union: With Child Care Inc., we are helping to design a child care response for 1199 members.

We have completed or are in the process of conducting needs assessments and designing a business response to work-family issues at:

- **Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy**
- **Illinois Bell**
- **Levi Strauss & Co.**
- **New York Telephone Co.**

In addition, in conjunction with Resources for Child Care Management, we design needs assessments and analyze the data. The companies we work with include: Allstate Insurance Company, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and Warner-Lambert Co.

4. TRAINING

The Families and Work Institute developed the work-family supervisory training model that Johnson & Johnson used to train its 6,000 managers company-wide. We also conducted management training at the Mayo Clinic and Conde Nast Publications, Inc.

We have joined with Work/Family Directions in Boston, MA to create Managing Smart, a management training program on work and family issues. Training is being conducted at Xerox Corp., Warner-Lambert Co., NCNB Corporation, and The DuPont Company, among others.

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